

Work Plan

- 1. Project Title:** Community Planning for Resiliency & Climate Justice in Gowanus and Red Hook, Brooklyn: A Public Education & Civic Engagement Workshop Series for Low-Income Public Housing Residents

Project Purpose Statement: Through direct community outreach - and by providing a series of public education workshops focused on resiliency planning and climate justice in South Brooklyn public housing - Fifth Avenue Committee, Inc. (FAC) will ensure that low-income public housing residents living in the coastal communities of Red Hook and Gowanus are meaningfully educated about resiliency planning so that they may inform public decisions being made around climate resiliency that impact them and their communities. As part of FAC's mission, this project aims to advance public engagement and equity for low income families.

The devastation unleashed by Superstorm Sandy in 2012 illuminated the fact that New York City's most vulnerable residents are least able to adapt in a crisis that levels homes, shuts down electrical power, and cuts off access to water and vital services. This vulnerability extends to low-income communities as a whole and to public housing residents and their developments specifically. Given the concentration of densely populated public housing in the NYC coastal communities of Red Hook and Gowanus, Brooklyn – and the concentration of poverty within public housing – low-income families living in these low-lying areas are especially vulnerable to the consequences of climate change.

Red Hook and Gowanus, Brooklyn, both located within NYC Hurricane Evacuation Zone 1, are neighborhoods that Fifth Avenue Committee (FAC) has worked in for decades. The neighborhood of Red Hook - on a peninsula in southwest Brooklyn (zip code 11231) - is in an especially low-lying, low-income coastal region with the highest risk of flooding during a hurricane-strength storm. Red Hook is a mix of public housing, working waterfront, industrial sites and new developments with the closest subway stop about a mile away. Over 50% of Red Hook's 11,379 residents live in Brooklyn's largest New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) complex, Red Hook Houses East and West. Gowanus (Zip Codes 11215, 11217, 11231), a neighborhood with a storied manufacturing legacy but with a new influx of entertainment, residential, and commercial uses, is adjacent to the most densely populated US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Superfund site in the country, the Gowanus Canal. Three major NYCHA developments in Gowanus are sited close to the Canal and are home to over 4,000 mostly poor and working class families.

Coupling grassroots organizing, advocacy and education on timely and critical environmental justice issues, Fifth Avenue Committee (FAC) works with low-income residents most impacted by environmental justice issues in underserved Brooklyn communities to become powerful voices of change.

A grant of \$30,000 from EPA ESGP will allow Fifth Avenue Committee, Inc. (FAC) to launch a series of public education and civic engagement workshops for low-income public housing residents called “Community Planning for Resiliency & Climate Justice in Gowanus & Red Hook, Brooklyn.” Specifically, FAC and its community partner Families United for Racial & Economic Equality (FUREE), will develop a series of four educational workshops: Sustainable Land Use, Equitable Recovery & Resiliency, Healthy Homes, and Community Planning for Climate Change, in addition to specific trainings on disaster coordination and relief.

The series will ensure that Red Hook and Gowanus public housing residents are meaningfully engaged and educated so that they may inform public decisions being made around climate resiliency that impact them and their communities and to advance equity for low income families. Specifically, the series will build upon work funded by a planning grant from The Kresge Foundation through its new *Climate Resiliency & Urban Opportunities Initiative*. Specifically, EPA EJ funds will support the public education component of a community-based and public housing

tenant-led resiliency planning initiative, which FAC has launched in collaboration with community partner *Families United for Racial and Economic Equality* (FUREE),

More than two years after Hurricane Sandy devastated these public housing developments, many of the buildings still sustain damage or still depend on exterior power generators that have been in service since after the super storm. Meanwhile, NYCHA is committed to spending millions of dollars in public sector resiliency investments to ensure greater resiliency and safety. The goal of FAC's efforts in developing this initiative is to ensure that local low-income public housing residents are engaged, informed and have a voice in the public review processes related to upcoming public sector resiliency investments - and to ensure that those investments improve the lives of low income public housing residents in both the short and long-term.

The Series is designed to engage low-income, minority, and public housing residents to address climate change impacts and community development from an equity framework perspective. FAC's experienced Organizing & Advocacy Unit will combine grassroots organizing, advocacy, and public education forums/workshops to achieve the following goals:

- Advocate for residents of public housing communities and FAC's Inquilinos Unidos - Tenants United group to build awareness around local environmental cleanups and the connection between environmental justice and future planning in our community;
- Hold an Equitable Recovery & Resiliency Workshop that will educate public housing tenants on NYCHA infrastructure and community preparedness;
- Participate in the WE ACT *Healthy Homes Campaign* by educating NYCHA tenants on air quality and asthma triggers in a Healthy Homes Workshop;
- Advocate for equitable economic development by raising awareness of "green" sector jobs and helping low-income populations gain meaningful employment;
- Hold a Sustainable Land Use Workshop that educates public housing tenants living in Gowanus and Red Hook on green infrastructure strategies, the siting of sewage retention tanks, and flooding;
- Hold a Community Planning for Climate Change Workshop that educates public housing tenants on equitable transit options, strategies for generating energy from local renewables, increasing reuse and recycling options, reducing the use of hazardous chemicals, and urban agriculture;
- Continue building a strong base of public housing residents to participate in the creation of the *Community Equity and Resiliency Preparedness Plan*.

Throughout the duration of the *Community Planning for Resiliency & Climate Justice Series*, Federal Environmental Statutes pursuant to the EJSJG Program will be addressed in the following ways:

- As a participant in WE ACT's *Healthy Homes Campaign*, FAC will facilitate workshops educating residents about lung health impacts potentially exacerbated by an increase in climate change-related pollution levels in relation to the *Clean Air Act*. The Gowanus Canal poses health risks for exposure to outdoor contaminants. Findings from an EPA Public Health Assessment on the Gowanus Canal in February 2014 concluded that air levels for five Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) exceeded EPA Regional Screening Levels (RSLs). In addition, researchers from the U.S National Institute for Health (NIH) have found high rates of asthma of people living close to Interstate 278, also known as the Gowanus Expressway. The findings indicate that vehicle emissions may increase the risk of developing inflammatory lung disease in adults. NYCHA developments Red Hook Houses East and West are adjacent to Interstate 278. To compound the problem, a NYC Department of Parks and Recreation 2005-2006 tree census found that the Gowanus-Red Hook area had limited tree density. According to U.S Forest Service scientists, trees not only improve air quality, but alleviate acute respiratory problems.¹
- The FAC-led Equitable Recovery & Resiliency Workshop will educate residents about the hazardous effects of Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs) and Chromium entering surface water from the Gowanus Canal as it pertains to the *Clean Water Act*. Residents will learn how to properly evacuate NYCHA buildings, how to avoid skin contact with chemical and biological contaminants in surface water, and how to be prepared in the face of climate change impacts.
- The Sustainable Land Use Workshop will educate residents about green infrastructure strategies that mitigate stormwater runoff and protect the community's water supply in relation to the *Safe Drinking Water Act*. In

¹ USDA – Forest Service <http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/news/release/trees-save-lives-reduce-air-pollution>

addition, the workshop will address the community's Combined Sewage Overflow (CSO) problem and the siting of the CSO Retention Tanks as it pertains to future flooding of the neighborhood.

- The development of a *Community Equity and Resiliency Preparedness Plan* will encompass trainings on disaster communication systems and will initiate the coordination of rapid response and relief teams. Training for emergency response, prevention, and control will be conducted in relation to the *Toxic Substances Control Act*, and the *Clean Water Act*. The Plan will lay out a multiyear approach to further engage and cultivate leadership opportunities among the low-income community in resiliency planning; develop equitable policy recommendations; and plan for implementing efforts to meet the needs of low-income people.

Community Planning for Resiliency & Climate Justice's community climate resiliency focus includes educating and engaging local low-income residents and the diverse populations FAC serves on climate adaptation planning, the impacts of climate change, and sustainable development practices. Through educational workshops, the Series will engage and prepare local residents to participate in planning discussions and processes around land use decisions affecting the Red Hook and Gowanus area and the future of neighborhoods. Additionally, the adoption of a *Community Equity and Resiliency Preparedness Plan* will help area residents better cope with future heavy storms. This multifaceted approach will ensure residents are aware of the important environmental issues as it relates to the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, and the Toxic Substances Control Act, and are involved in future climate adaptation planning.

II. Environmental, Public Health and Community Climate Resiliency Information about the Affected Community

Environmental, Public Health and Climate Resiliency Issues

Brooklyn is New York City's most populous borough and nearly 60,000 low-income families in Brooklyn are housed by NYCHA. With 2.6 million residents, Brooklyn would be the fourth largest U.S. city by population on its own and if NYCHA was a city, it would rank 27th in population size in the United States. Due to a number of historic factors, including the siting of NYC public housing in mixed-use and less accessible waterfront areas, thousands of low-income families were the most heavily impacted by recent climate change-related shocks, including Hurricane Irene in 2011 and Superstorm Sandy in 2012.

Jutting out into the Gowanus Bay, the Southwest Brooklyn neighborhood of Red Hook is in an especially low-lying, low-income coastal region with the highest risk of flooding during a hurricane-strength storm. Red Hook is a mix of public housing, working waterfront, industrial sites and new developments with the closest subway stop about a mile away. Gowanus is adjacent to the most densely populated US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Superfund site in the country, the Gowanus Canal. Both coastal communities are inundated with various forms of historic industrial contamination and are at risk for another major flooding event. (*Please see attached map of neighborhood poverty, public housing sites, and hurricane evacuation zones*).

South Brooklyn is confronting the repercussions of its manufacturing past as more of its former industrial sites that are contaminated become the focus of increased government attention and cleanup actions, including the neighborhoods along the Gowanus Canal. In addition to the Gowanus Canal being a Superfund Site, the area is home to dozens of contaminated brownfield sites and three former Manufactured Gas Plants (MPG's) that are being investigated and cleaned up under the oversight of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC).

FAC Successes

FAC has played a central role in area-wide civic engagement initiatives, such as *Bridging Gowanus*, a community planning initiative launched by local elected officials in the fall of 2013. Additionally, FAC is working to organize, educate, and advocate for residents of public housing communities and FAC's Inquilinos Unidos - Tenants United group to build awareness around local environmental cleanups and the connection between environmental justice and future planning in our community.

FAC's Organizing & Advocacy unit continues to increase civic participation in the EPA's Community Advisory Group (CAG) by low-income neighbors and residents of color from Gowanus and Red Hook. For example, five local NYCHA residents recently submitted applications to the CAG. FAC continues to host meetings and remain active in the CAG's Outreach and Engagement committee and attends full CAG meetings.

FAC also filmed the EPA's Record of Decision (ROD) on the Gowanus Canal Cleanup press conference in Spanish and English and shared the video on the CAG's YouTube Channel. FAC brought a contingent of FAC's Inquilinos Unidos - Tenants United group to the press conference, and has advocated for Spanish translation to be provided at all meetings and the need for more inclusion and outreach to the longstanding Gowanus area Latino residents. Judith Enck, EPA Regional Administrator of Region 2, acknowledged the need and committed to holding a special Spanish-speaking Community Forum at the next large community update meeting. Following the ROD press conference, FAC recruited residents to attend two EPA public meetings to discuss the ROD. In response to FAC's advocacy efforts, the EPA provided interpretation services and offered diverse locations at each local meeting.

Affected Communities

The Gowanus neighborhood is loosely defined as the area bordered by Baltic St. to the north; Fifth Ave. to the east; 14th St. to the south; and Smith St. to the west. Approximately 21,400 people live in Gowanus, while about 185,950 people live within one mile of the site (US Census Bureau, 2011). The target population this project is the residents of the NYCHA properties including Gowanus Houses and Wyckoff Gardens. The Gowanus Houses are situated in what is now NYC Hurricane Evacuation Zone 2. The development consists of 14 buildings, housing approximately 2,836 residents. Wyckoff Gardens is located in NYC Hurricane Evacuation Zone 4 and consists of three 21-story buildings housing 1,226 people.²

The waterfront Red Hook neighborhood runs southwest of Hamilton Avenue (which follows Interstate 278) between the East River and Gowanus Bay. Red Hook is adjacent to the neighborhoods of Carroll Gardens, Gowanus and Cobble Hill, but is a geographically isolated peninsula between Buttermilk Channel, Gowanus Bay, and the Gowanus Canal. The neighborhood is densely populated (pop. 11,069 in 0.82 square miles) with the largest public housing complexes in Brooklyn: Red Hook East and West. Red Hook East has 27 buildings, 2 and 6-stories high with 2,528 apartments housing 5,654 residents. Red Hook West has three buildings, 3 and 14-stories tall with 345 apartments housing 864 residents.³ Both Red Hook West and East are located in NYC hurricane evacuation Zone 1. The area has a concentration of low-income housing and disproportionate rates of poverty and poor health outcomes, such as high levels of asthma and diabetes, largely experienced by Black and Latino residents (American Community Survey, US Census, 2005-2009).

Today, nearly 40% of these residents live below the federal poverty level of \$23,550 for a family of four. More than 3,000 of these families live with household incomes of less than \$20,000 per year, and the high school graduation rate barely reaches 50%. While the official unemployment rate is 7% in Gowanus and 11% in Red Hook, on average 57% of all working age NYCHA residents do not participate in the labor force. According to a recent NYCHA housing report, the unemployment rate for 18 – 25 year olds in the Red Hook Houses is even higher at 75%. Many Red Hook residents are burdened by major physical isolation, as transportation options are limited and infrequent.

Public housing residents in Red Hook and Gowanus were disproportionately affected by Superstorm Sandy. Red Hook Houses residents were left without power or access to clean water for 14 days after the storm and the Gowanus Houses experienced the same conditions for 10 days after the storm. Many residents in both communities were stranded in high-rise buildings without water or power and little access to food or medicine. Many of these residents are elderly, frail, or mobility impaired and faced serious safety issues when elevators were not in working order. *Enterprise New York's Sandy Impact Analysis* describes the most impacted populations who registered for post-Sandy FEMA assistance:

Of all registrants, 43% reported household incomes less than \$30,000 per year, indicating a significant need among lower income households. Of all renter registrants, 68% were low income (with annual incomes less than \$30,000). Of renter registrants, 55% with damage evaluations sustained either "major" or "substantial" damage to their property. In the areas where New York City FEMA registrants are located, 46% of renters are white, 37% are black or Asian, and 29% are Hispanic.⁴

² New York City Housing Authority – NYCHA Housing Developments <http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycha/html/developments/bklyngowanus.shtml>

³ New York City Housing Authority – NYCHA Housing Developments <http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycha/html/developments/bklynredhook2.shtml>

⁴ *Enterprise New York – FEMA Assistance Analysis*. <http://blog.enterprisecommunity.com/2013/03/superstorm-sandys-impact-on-affordable-housing.html>

In total, public housing developments in Red Hook and Gowanus are home to nearly 10,500 residents living in 5,660 units, all located within NYC Hurricane Evacuation Zones 1 and 2.

Gowanus and Red Hook residents also suffer from substandard housing conditions. According to the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), households in high poverty areas are three times more likely to report maintenance deficiencies compared to households classified as low poverty. Similarly, 29% of high poverty homes have water leaks; compared to only 15% of low poverty homes in NYC. Public Housing units in NYC are home to the greatest frequency in maintenance deficiencies, including unabated mold; mold growth conditions in residential housing have been cited as being a significant environmental exposure factor associated with allergic responses that provoke asthma attacks. (Please see attached map: “Homes with Leaks”)

Community Planning for Resiliency & Climate Justice Series will help Red Hook and Gowanus residents become informed on community climate resiliency issues and engage in the climate adaptation planning process. It is important that residents most affected by climate resiliency issues understand the repercussions of future climate change impacts, and participate in planning discussions and processes around land use decisions. Through environmental education, grassroots organizing, and public engagement, the Series will give low-income residents of Gowanus and Red Hook a voice in decisions impacting their communities.

III. Organization’s Historical Connection to the Affected Community

Founded by a group of volunteer neighbors in 1978, FAC is a nationally recognized, nonprofit community development corporation in South Brooklyn that advances economic and social justice by building vibrant, diverse communities where residents have genuine opportunities to achieve their goals, as well as the power to shape the community’s future. FAC works to transform the lives of over 5,500 low- and moderate-income New Yorkers annually so that we can all live and work with dignity and respect while making our community more equitable, sustainable, inclusive, and just. To achieve our mission, FAC develops and manages affordable housing and community facilities, creates economic opportunities and ensures access to economic stability, organizes residents and workers, offers student-centered adult education, and combats displacement caused by gentrification.

When Superstorm Sandy struck NYC in October 2012, the individuals and communities that FAC serves were deeply impacted. FAC immediately mobilized to respond and has since been highly engaged in community-based rebuilding and resiliency efforts in the context of citywide and broader resiliency efforts. FAC’s post-Sandy interventions have included: responding to the immediate needs of low and moderate income residents living in FAC-managed properties that were flooded; immediate outreach to over 700 Sandy-impacted families whom FAC serves directly; providing a dozen permanently displaced hurricane victims with affordable rental apartments; launching our *Rebuilding in Red Hook and Gowanus Initiative* that has focused on assisting moderate income homeowners with rebuilding and resiliency efforts; conducting disaster preparedness, policy advocacy, and social resiliency efforts; and, in partnership with community-based partner FUREE, working with public housing tenants living in Gowanus, Brooklyn.

Over the past year, FAC and FUREE have spearheaded the *Building Social Resiliency Initiative* in NYCHA’s Gowanus Houses, Wyckoff Gardens, and Warren Street Houses developments. This initiative has been highly successful in focusing attention on the lack of equity in the Gowanus NYCHA developments and has created powerful networks for the larger Gowanus community - connecting public housing residents to government entities to participate in local information exchange and discussions about climate adaptation, environmental remediation, and resiliency planning and policy. Not only have we built Social Resiliency amongst our target population, the residents of Gowanus Houses, Wyckoff Gardens and Warren Street Houses, but broadened the working relationship between FAC and FUREE has been broadened. Our activities with the wider Neighborhood & Housing Recovery coalition has enabled FAC and FUREE to become Community Responders, supporting and building resident and CDC disaster response networks that will have enduring impacts for local and citywide emergency preparedness and response.

Over 400 public housing residents have demonstrated an on-going commitment to disaster preparedness work, including attending trainings and meetings and recruiting other volunteers or community members. Specifically, 179 public housing residents from Gowanus, Wyckoff, and Warren Street Houses have committed to preparing their own Household Disaster Preparedness Plans (HPP); 133 have formally signed-up to be Community Responders and to

participate in a community-led disaster preparedness plan process; and another 243 Public Housing residents from Gowanus, Wyckoff and Warren Street Houses have engaged in related conversations around resiliency in the post-Sandy local environmental landscape (rebuilding and remediation activities requiring resident input in order to be successful and equitable). Rebuilding and remediation activities are: addressing flooding from the Gowanus Canal, addressing raw sewage and storm water overflows, the design phase for the EPA Gowanus Canal Superfund cleanup, and the Feasibility Study phase for the former Fulton Manufactured Gas Plant NYS DEC brownfield site cleanup. The two large scale cleanups are both happening at the Northern end of the Gowanus Canal, which sits less than 200 feet away from the Gowanus Houses NYCHA development.

Fifth Avenue Committee continues to maintain and sustain an ongoing relationship with residents of Gowanus and Red Hook through community outreach, organizing, and education. FAC's *South Brooklyn Accountable Development Initiative* (SBADI) is involved in several campaigns to build greater social resiliency in South Brooklyn with a particular attention to the over 4,000 low-income residents of NYCHA Gowanus-area developments. FAC's partnership with FUREE is working with tenants and NYCHA to ensure that residents are better prepared to adapt and respond to future climate-related disasters and participating in local discussions about climate adaptation planning and policy. SBADI staff is continuing to encourage Gowanus NYCHA tenant participation through hosting EPA CAG meetings and other public meetings at the FAC Center for Community Development and Wyckoff Gardens Community Center and coordinating with Congresswoman Velazquez's office. By providing and protecting affordable housing options and social services in South Brooklyn, and by advocating for the interests of low income populations, FAC continues its long-term commitment to serving the neighborhoods of Gowanus and Red Hook.

IV. Project Description

The Local Environmental, Public Health, and Community Climate Resiliency Results The Project Projects Seeks to Achieve

If funded, *Community Planning for Resiliency and Climate Justice Series* will enable FAC to sustain its participate in future climate resiliency planning in Gowanus and Red Hook and conduct grassroots organizing, education, and advocacy. Working off FAC's DARES initiative, FAC's Organizing & Advocacy staff will continue to engage Red Hook and Gowanus NYCHA residents on climate change and resiliency planning through education, tenant empowerment, and NYCHA advocacy.

FAC-organized educational workshops will be held at the FAC Center of Community Development in Gowanus, Brooklyn, a short walk from the three Gowanus-area NYCHA developments and accessible via public transportation from Red Hook. The educational workshops will feature a number of city agencies, officials, and experts and address community climate resiliency issues including: Combined Sewage Overflow (CSO), NYCHA infrastructure, chemical and biological contaminants, community preparedness, equitable transit options, open space, the siting of sewage retention tanks, emergency response, and flooding from major storms.

Workshops will also address the disproportionate rate of asthma in Red Hook and Gowanus and increase awareness of the relationship between the indoor environment and health. Tangentially, FAC will continue its involvement in the WE ACT *Healthy Homes Campaign* through advocating for legislation like the *Asthma Free Bill*, with the goal to improve the housing conditions and the health of low and moderate income New Yorkers.

Funding for the Series will ensure that FAC Organizers & Advocates can sustain advocacy campaigns for responsible workforce development and hiring efforts, given the nearly \$1 billion combined investment in the cleanup of the Gowanus Canal and the three former Manufactured Gas Plant sites. A more socially resilient South Brooklyn is contingent on equitable economic development, including assisting low-income populations achieve meaningful and sustainable employment. FAC will help connect area residents to "green" sector jobs by linking the approximate \$500 million in private investment to clean up the Gowanus Canal to workforce and job opportunities for local residents.

In partnership with FUREE, FAC will continue building a strong base of residents to participate in the construction of the *Community Equity and Resiliency Preparedness Plan*. FAC will identify a group of resident leaders in order to have a trained, committed, and locally-based leadership of first responders. These trained leaders will participate in and co-lead Series workshops and trainings on disaster communication systems and coordinating rapid response and relief teams. Through these trainings, educational workshops, and advocacy residents will learn about policy development

and be given the right tools to become active citizens in storm preparedness and resiliency planning. Additional community partners will coordinate with FAC to offer holistic relief efforts.

How the Project Will Achieve These Results

The Series team, which will include public housing tenant leaders engaged and trained by **FAC and FUREE**, will **develop a series of four educational workshops: Sustainable Land Use, Equitable Recovery & Resiliency, Healthy Homes, and Community Planning for Climate Change, in addition to specific trainings on disaster coordination and relief.** The Project Team will analyze how current resiliency plans impact the low-income families in Red Hook and Gowanus by identifying gaps and opportunities, considering discussions, focus groups, surveys, and door-to-door outreach focused on NYCHA residents in both communities. The project will culminate with the development of a *Community Equity and Resiliency Preparedness Plan* that lays out a multiyear approach to further engage and cultivate leadership opportunities among the low-income community in resiliency planning; develop equitable policy recommendations; and plan for implementing efforts to meet the needs of low-income people.

How the Project is Related to Environmental Statutes

The Series will engage the residents in citywide proposed disaster planning, mitigation, and recovery efforts in relation to the *Safe Water Act*, the *Clean Air Act*, *Safe Drinking Water Act*, and the *Toxic Substances Control Act*. As the current planning landscape is changing and adjusting to the potential for more frequent and severe storms, communities will be engaged in the planning process and understand storm preparedness. Educational Workshops will bring to light environmental issues including avoiding chemical and biological contaminants in relation to the *Safe Drinking Water Act*, identifying lung health impacts in relation to the *Clean Air Act*, and green infrastructure mitigation strategies in relation to the *Safe Drinking Water Act*. Additionally, the *Community Equity and Resiliency Preparedness Plan* will address environmental issues in the *Clean Air Act*, *Safe Water Act*, and the *Toxic Substances Control Act*. This document will guide the community in medium to long-term response to storm-related disasters.

The Role of the Partner(s) in Addressing Local Environmental, Public Health, and Community Climate Resiliency Issues

Fifth Avenue Committee

Through its affordable housing development, property management, workforce development, organizing and advocacy, and adult education and literacy programs, FAC has been deeply rooted in Red Hook and Gowanus for more than 15 years prior to Superstorm Sandy hitting. FAC manages more than 200 units of affordable housing in Gowanus alone. Several FAC-managed properties in Gowanus and Red Hook experienced damages due to the storm, with one property in Gowanus needing to be evacuated for a month due to a lack of electricity. Once all impacted properties became fully functioning, FAC filled some of its vacant property residential units with low-income families that had experienced displacement as a result of the storm.

FAC is also engaged in helping those impacted by Sandy make physical improvements to their homes and recover from additional Sandy impacts such as loss of income due to lost jobs, loss of rental income from damaged property, and previously undetected predatory lending or refinancing practices. FAC is connecting individuals to its Community Services unit and foreclosure prevention counselors, through affiliate Neighbors Helping Neighbors (NHN), for assistance that goes beyond physical rebuilding.

Organizing and Advocacy programs at FAC, like SBADI, combine grassroots community organizing, policy research, and popular education through to engage and galvanize the public and ensure that the interests of low- and moderate-income residents inform the policy and development decisions most impacting Brooklyn neighborhoods. It is through this work that FAC has engaged Gowanus NYCHA residents to become informed citizens, to meaningfully participate in public decision-making processes involving the community, and to be prepared to further engage in climate adaptation planning.

FUREE

FUREE was founded in 2001 and combines community organizing, leadership development, civic engagement, and political education to advance systemic changes. Following the landing of Superstorm Sandy, FUREE provided relief to five affected buildings that lost power, heat, and hot water for 11 days due to unexpected flooding from the Gowanus Canal. This support included a wide variety of activities such as: marshaling over 200 members, Gowanus

residents, and volunteers to canvass all affected buildings three times daily; opening an emergency food pantry; coordinating hot meal delivery for breakfast, lunch, and dinner; engaging medical services partners to provide at-home medical assessments, refill or write prescriptions, and coordinate hospital transfers; managing social services partners to provide psycho-social support; and recruiting legal services partners to provide support for those who lost public benefits. FUREE also worked with City Council Member Stephen Levin and State Assembly Member Joan Millman to hold NYCHA accountable to restoring services to impacted buildings.

FAC and FUREE have a vested interest in working together to serve the local community since they were both founded on the belief that building sustainable neighborhoods requires civic engagement in the planning processes affecting communities. Since this partnership will have a direct impact on the low income families living in Gowanus and Red Hook, it is in their shared interest to see this partnership succeed.

V. Organizational Capacity and Programmatic Capability

FAC will draw upon its 36-year experience in grassroots organizing, adult education, and advocacy to successfully launch and sustain *Community Planning for Resiliency and Climate Justice*. FAC is in a unique position to implement the Series by building on a foundation of experience in:

Organizing & Advocacy Programs at FAC provide tenant advocacy and organizing to over 300 vulnerable, low-income tenants and families, directly preventing 200 unfair evictions annually. The unit also leads and works in a range of broad-based coalitions on a number of local and city-wide campaigns that fight for housing, workplace, environmental and economic justice. This now includes a campaign to hold investors responsible for maintaining safe living conditions in multi-family dwellings facing foreclosure or other effects of predatory investment; a *Housing Court Reform Campaign* to force changes in the Brooklyn Housing Court system and make it more responsive to the needs of poor and low-income households; and the *Real Rent Reform Campaign*, which brings collective pressure on government agencies and officials and advocates to keep NYC housing affordable and our neighborhoods economically diverse.

Affordable Housing Development has been a cornerstone of FAC's work. Throughout its 36-year history, the organization has produced over 900 units of affordable housing in more than 100 buildings, revitalized more than a dozen commercial storefronts, and has over 310 units in development with a pipeline of an additional 775 units, representing over \$400 million in direct investment in South Brooklyn.

Workforce & Economic Development Programs – FAC's *Neighborhood Employment Services* (NES) program provides direct job placement and counseling to low-income New Yorkers. NES offers job readiness education and vocational counseling. It cultivates employer relationships, makes careful placements, and provides ongoing supportive services to as many as 309 participants annually. NES works closely with FAC's workforce development affiliate, *Brooklyn Workforce Innovations*, which provides over 800 individuals with sector-based, targeted skills training programs rooted in employer demand. These programs include: a commercial driver training program, a woodworker training program, film and television production assistant's training program, driver education program, a teledata cable installation training program, and a collaboration with NYCHA to train NYCHA residents for employment in NYCHA jobs. All of these programs serve people with significant barriers to employment, such as low levels of education, long-term unemployment or underemployment, and those with histories of court involvement.

Adult Education & Literacy programs at FAC offer a range of classes, including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Adult Basic Education (ABE), General Equivalency Diploma (GED), and family literacy to over 525 students from 30 countries of origin annually. According to the NYS Department of Education, FAC is in the top quartile of adult education programs statewide.

Single Stop at FAC offers benefits access assistance as well as financial and legal counseling services to poor and low-income residents. Single Stop at FAC is among the most effective Single Stop programs in the city's five boroughs. Throughout 2013, FAC Single Stop at FAC screened 1,127 low-income New Yorkers from throughout New York City for public benefits eligibility - including Medicaid and Food Stamps - and returned more than \$3.8 million in cash and non-cash benefits. The program provided free tax filing assistance to more than 220 residents and financial and

credit counseling to over 615 additional participants. Over the coming year, FAC will integrate this program more deeply with its other program areas, most notably its new initiative in Foreclosure Prevention Counseling through *Neighbors Helping Neighbors* (NHN), FAC's newest nonprofit affiliate organization.

Effective Management and Successful Completion of Proposed Project

FAC's public program concepts and outreach strategies are designed to ensure that low- and moderate-income community residents are made aware of the future development of their community and that *all* residents have the opportunity to become educated on the issues and to have their voices heard.

The Series will be well integrated into existing processes and meetings, like NYCHA community meetings and committees, community boards, and other public sector-led climate change resiliency efforts. To ensure flexibility, the Project Team will meet bimonthly to analyze findings, review recent developments, determine if current strategy is responsive to the needs of low-income communities in Red Hook and Gowanus, and check in on progress against goals. After each meeting, the Project Team will adapt strategy and efforts as needed to ensure that the final work plan will accurately reflect the needs of the local residents and help achieve the Series' prioritized co-benefits, including workforce development and community leadership goals.

FAC will measure the project both quantitatively and qualitatively and considers the level of public engagement in our grassroots organizing, popular education, and outreach efforts. The degree to which an event is effective can be gauged by considering the diversity of program participants and their backgrounds. This is evaluated internally by keeping track of number and diversity of residents and related stakeholders at meetings and educational opportunities and tracking the number of participants that become involved in FAC's advocacy work, as well as those who become actively involved in formal public review processes.

FAC's administrative team is supervised by the Chief Financial Officer and includes a Bookkeeper and an asset manager, all of them proficient in Fund EZ software.

VI. Qualifications of the Project Manager (PM)

The *Community Planning for Resiliency and Climate Justice* Series project team will include:

Michelle de la Uz - Executive Director of Fifth Avenue Committee, Inc. (FAC) beginning in January 2004, after serving as Co-Chair on FAC's Board of Directors. She has over twenty years of experience in public and community service. Michelle oversees the organization's mission and comprehensive programs serving more than 5,500 low- and moderate-income people; a budget of more than \$5 million and several affiliate corporations, assets over \$100 million, and a housing development pipeline of more than 1,000 units, or nearly \$400 million. Prior to FAC, she was Program Director for the Center for Urban Community Services in Washington Heights and Harlem and oversaw social services in supportive housing for 400 low-income tenants with special needs. From 1995-99, Michelle was Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez' first Director of Constituent Services and directed her South Brooklyn District Office. She was active in advancing transportation, environmental justice, immigration reform, and employment policy initiatives. Michelle is the first in her working-class immigrant family to graduate from college, is a product of bi-lingual education, a former trustee of Connecticut College, and recipient of the Ford Foundation's Leadership for a Changing World award. Michelle serves on the National Board of Directors of the Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC) and was appointed in April 2012 by then-Public Advocate, and now Mayor of New York City, Bill de Blasio to serve on the New York City Planning Commission.

Dave Powell, Director of Tenant Organizing and Advocacy, joined FAC in May 2014 and reports to the Executive Director of Fifth Avenue Committee. Dave oversees FAC's Community Organizing & Advocacy unit and assists FAC's low-income participants through advocacy, education, community organizing and civic engagement. He has over 15 years of experience in community organizing and advocacy. In addition to working with the Fifth Avenue Committee, Dave has worked for the Metropolitan Council on Housing, Tenants & Neighbors, and the Southern Bronx River Watershed Alliance. He holds a Masters Degree in Urban Planning from Hunter College, CUNY.

Sabine Aronowsky joined FAC this past spring as coordinator of *The South Brooklyn Accountable Development Initiative*. Sabine holds a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Baruch College, CUNY, and received Baruch's Susan Ponce de Leon Scholarship for commitment to affordable housing and community development. She is a community activist, life-long resident of Gowanus and Lower Park Slope, and has served on the US EPA's Community Advisory Group (CAG) in South Brooklyn as an at-large member since its inception in 2010, when the Gowanus Canal became listed as a Superfund site.

VI. Past Performance in Reporting on Outputs and Outcomes

RELEVANT FUNDING IN THE PAST 5 YEARS				
Project	Funding Agency	Grant #	Annual Amount	Contact
Foreclosure Prevention Counseling Program	NYS – Attorney General (Housing Protection Program)	n/a	\$94,000	Michelle de la Uz
Foreclosure Prevention Counseling Program	NYC Private Donors Collaborative for Neighborhood Recovery (Housing)	n/a	\$75,000	Michelle de la Uz
<i>Building Social Capital:</i> Resiliency in Gowanus & Wyckoff Gardens	NYC Private Donors Collaborative (Organizing)	n/a	\$84,000	Michelle de la Uz
South Brooklyn Accountable Development Initiative (SBADI)	New York Community Trust	n/a	\$35,000	Michelle de la Uz
SBADI	Mertz Gilmore Foundation	n/a	\$140,000	Michelle de la Uz

FAC utilizes donor-mandated databases to track and report outcomes in performance-based contracts. FAC currently has a client database that tracks the involvement of community residents in programs and activities.